

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 SSO-00 SS-15 NSCE-00 SP-02
VO-05 CA-01 L-03 H-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
INRE-00 /055 W
-----120082 241658Z /45

O R 241603Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7056
INFO USDOC WASHDC
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1139

DEPT FOR EUR/SOV

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: BTRA, PDIP, UR
SUBJECT: VISA AND CUSTOMS CLEARANCE DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED
BY TWO U.S. BUSINESS TRAVELERS TO SOVIET UNION

BEGIN SUMMARY. TWO U.S. BUSINESSMEN, BOTH FREQUENT TRAVELLERS
TO USSR, HAVE REPORTED PROBLEMS TO US WHICH THEY
EXPERIENCED IN PAST FEW DAYS BOTH WITH SOVIET
CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES AT MOSCOW'S SHEREMETYEVO
AIRPORT AND IN RECEIVING VISAS THROUGH SOVIET
EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. WHILE BOTH INSTANCES
ARE UNRELATED INsofar AS BUSINESSMEN THEMSELVES
ARE CONCERNED, WE ARE AWARE OF NO SUBSTANTIVE GROUNDS FOR HARASS-
MENT AND PERCEIVE A POSSIBLE TIE-IN WITH RECENT EXPULSIONS
OF SOVIET TRADE OFFICIALS.

END SUMMARY.

1. DR. JULIUS JAMBOR, PRESIDENT OF JAMBOR ENTERPRISES
IN NEW YORK CITY, ARRIVED IN MOSCOW BY AIR ON
SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, AND WAS TREATED BY SOVIET
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CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES TO MOST COMPREHENSIVE AND
SYSTEMATIC SEARCH OF HIS PERSON AND HIS EFFECTS
WHICH, HE SAID, HE HAS EVER EXPERIENCED.
A WELL-KNOWN VISITOR TO U.S. COMMERCIAL
OFFICE, DR. JAMBOR HAS BEEN COMING TO MOSCOW
REGULARLY (ABOUT EVERY TWO MONTHS) SINCE JAMBOR
ENTERPRISES BEGAN MARKETING U.S. MEDICAL AND

DENTAL SUPPLIES IN USSR IN 1973. NEVER BEFORE, ACCORDING TO JAMBOR, HAD SOVIET PASSPORT AND CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES BEEN AS NASTY TO HIM AS THEY WERE ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON. EACH ITEM IN HIS LUGGAGE WAS MINUTELY INSPECTED OVER A NINETY-MINUTE PERIOD AND HE WAS, IN ADDITION, SUBJECTED TO A GROSS BODY SEARCH.

2. LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF WJS, INC., AN AGENCY/ REPRESENTATIVE FIRM IN WASHINGTON WITH RELATIVELY LONG HISTORY IN EAST-WEST TRADE AND GENERALLY EXCELLENT CONTACTS AMONG SOVIET FTO'S AND INDUSTRIAL MINISTRIES, REPORTED TO US JANUARY 22 THAT ILYA LEKUCH, FIRM'S WASHINGTON-BASED VP FOR USSR, HAD TWICE BEEN DENIED VISAS TO COME TO MOSCOW IN RECENT DAYS. FIRST INSTANCE CAME WHEN FTO AVTOPROMIMPORT SUPPORTED LEKUCH'S VISA APPLICATION FOR ARRIVAL IN MOSCOW ON JANUARY 15, BUT SOVEMB IN WASHINGTON REFUSED TO ISSUE IT. SECOND OCCASION CAME WHEN FTO EXPORTLYON SUPPORTED LEKUCH FOR TRIP IN ON JANUARY 22 WITH SAME RESULT. IN BOTH CASES, ACCORDING TO ANDREWS, REPRESENTATIVES OF PRINCIPAL U.S. FIRMS WHICH LEKUCH WAS TO ACCOMPANY WERE GRANTED THEIR VISAS WITHOUT DELAY, EVEN THOUGH FTO SUPPORT TELEXES INCLUDED LEKUCH'S NAME AS WELL. NO REASONS WERE GIVEN BY SOVIETS
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FOR DENYING VISAS TO LEKUCH, DESPITE FACT THAT HE TRAVELS TO MOSCOW REGULARLY -- AT LEAST ONCE EVERY QUARTER FOR PAST THREE OR FOUR YEARS. LEKUCH IS A NATIVE OF LATVIA AND EMIGRATED WITH HIS PARENTS TO U.S. REPORTEDLY AS A CHILD.

3. COMMENT: WE PERCEIVE A POSSIBLE NEXUS BETWEEN THOSE TWO APPARENTLY UNRELATED CASES AND RECENT EXPULSIONS OF SOVIET TRADE OFFICIALS. WE ASSUME SOVIETS MAY BE VENTING THEIR SPLEEN ON U.S. BUSINESSMEN. IT WILL OF COURSE BE IMPORTANT TO SEE WHETHER THIS BECOMES A PATTERN FOR HARASSMENT OR A QUICK REACTION TAKEN FOR WANT OF MORE DESIRABLE TARGETS. IN LEKUCH CASE WE NOTE THAT ALL VISA APPLICATIONS FOR U.S. BUSINESS VISITORS ARE FIRST APPROVED BY SOVIET TRADE REPRESENTATION IN WASHINGTON BEFORE SOVEMB DECIDES TO ISSUE/DENY VISAS. SINCE THEY REPORTEDLY ALLOWED HIS PRINCIPAL BUSINESS PARTNERS TO CARRY ON SUBSTANTIVE COMMERCIAL DISCUSSIONS, LEKUCH VISA DENIALS CAN BE SEEN AS DIRECTED AGAINST HIM PERSONALLY AND NOT AS MEANS OF FRUSTRATING COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY OF INTEREST TO THE SOVIETS.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: REQUEST DEPARTMENT CONSIDER

SUBJECTING SUITABLE NON-DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVE OF SOVIET
COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENT TO THOROUGH CUSTOMS AND PASSPORT
SCRUTINY AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY. ONCE THIS HAS BEEN DONE,
SOVIETS SHOULD BE APPRAISED OF REASON. WHILE WE WOULD NOT
RECOMMEND THAT SIMILAR ACTION YET BE TAKEN ON VISA SIDE,
MATTER SHOULD BE WATCHED CLOSELY. IF PATTERN RECURS, WE
BELIEVE WE SHOULD RETALIATE IN KIND.

5. WE BELIEVE THAT THESE CASES SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO SOVIET
ATTENTION AT FIRST APPROPRIATE OCCASION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CUSTOMS DUTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW01139
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780035-0776
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780129/aaaaaykh.tel
Line Count: 126
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 32e6a1e0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3723831
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISA AND CUSTOMS CLEARANCE DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY TWO U.S. BUSINESS TRAVELERS TO SOVIET UNION BEGIN SUMMARY. TWO U.S. BUSINESSMEN, BOTH FREQUENT
TAGS: BTRA, PDIP, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/32e6a1e0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014